DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 046 358 HE 001 953

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TITLE	Relevance for Town and Gown.
INSTITUTION	Western Coll. Association, Oakland, Calif.
PUB DATE	Mar 70
NOTE	10p.; Address delivered at the annual meeting of the Western College Association, Palo Alto, California, March 5-6, 1970
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Activism, *Educational Change, Educational Improvement, *Governance, *Higher Education, *Relevance (Education), *School Community Relationship, Student Attitudes, Student Interests

ABSTRACT

Campus disturbances coupled with vastly increased costs of higher education have contributed to the deterioration of Town-Gown relations. But the faith of the Town in the ultimate value of U.S. mass higher education remains intact, although it does ask that the students understand its perplexities, its diverse interests, its incredible interdependence, and its aspirations, and feel a commitment to the community. The students demand relevance, which for some means that they want to teach not learn, to lecture, not listen, to tear down, not build; for some that they only want to learn things that bear directly on the ills of society, that they want to learn to earn, and that they want to learn about themselves. Higher education will have to change to accommodate to changing needs and demands. These changes should include: (1) a major overhaul of college teaching, (2) modification of graduate degrees, (3) expansion of the interdisciplinary approach, (4) abandonment of lectures that repeat books, (5) increase of reading assignments, (6) fewer and more comprehensive examinations, (7) strengthening of the junior college, (8) greater exchange between Town and Gown, (9) increased student participation in decisionmaking, (10) making history a required subject, and (11) the reconstitution of the college presidency. (AF)

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LOUIS H. HEILBRON

Relevance for Town and Gown

A LITTLE over a year ago, while still a trustee of the State Colleges, I visited the library at San Francisco State College during the period of the student demonstrations and boycott. During the preceding night a number of militant student protesters had succeeded in invading the library and had transferred books from and to widely separated shelves, spilled others helter skelter on the tables and on the floor. Thus, a book on Elizabethan drama might have been placed against a book on engineering or chemistry and a book on electricity against a book on psychology or medieval art. This disruption was carried out in the name of the protest that the college must become more relevant in its offerings and its teachings though the new, anarchial juxtaposition of books did not contribute much of a guideline.

Thus, for many of us, was ushered in the Age of Relevance. The university, the college, to justify its existence, must be "relevant." But relevant to what? And who sets the standards for relevance? A number of radical students had an immediate answer. Everything should stop until the College adopted an educational program for Afro-American studies which the interested black students deemed to meet their needs, to be taught by black professors approved by the black students. In the meantime, all classes irrespective of subject should devote themselves to discussing this issue and other social and political issues of the day and forget the four-lettered litter that constituted their regular assignments. Tell it like it is. Tell it like we want to hear it. Then we'll decide what to do about it here and in the Town.

Now, all students did not make demands in these terms. Students were and are divided in their interests and purposes, as other groups differ. But the well-organized minority and militant groups practically brought the College to a halt despite the presence and vigorous tactics of the police. Similar disruptions took place in campuses throughout the United States in the closing years of the 60's and still continue.

The views of the Town were clearly and forcefully expressed. The public saw no place for violence on a college campus. It made no sense in an institution based on knowledge and reason and providing any number of forums for dissent and discussion. The community felt that student violence on a campus is as misplaced as a shooting in a church. The community — city, state, and nation — recorded its displeasure in threats to reduce the financial support of public and private institutions. In the final action on legislative bills the threats were not generally implemented, but the message came through.

The same view is expressed about student violence off campus. The Town sees student violence, as at Santa Barbara, as a culmination of *non*

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sequiturs. If the students are unhappy about the verdict against the Chicago Seven; if they are dissatisfied with their rents; if they feel depressed by the Viet Nam war; if, as a few claim, they have been harassed by unreasonable police searches for the possession of marijuana — what justification do these complaints give 500 or 1,000 of them to hurl rocks in the streets, break hundreds of shop windows, overturn automobiles, and burn down a bank?

The Town was awakened to the vastly increased costs of higher education and has rumbled and grumbled ever since. But, the faith of the Town in the ultimate value of U.S. mass higher education remains fairly intact. The Town's wants in relation to the university or college in its midst are fairly simple; namely, (1) train our young people to do the middle and upper jobs in industry, agriculture, government, and the professions; (2) keep them quiet in the meantime; (3) educate them to be responsible, stable citizens, not revolutionaries; and (4) try to keep the boys distinguishable from the girls and to hold them apart as much as possible after the library closes. Occasionally, the Town worries that perhaps the faculties are not the right people to instruct students to participate in the economy and in the obligations of citizenship. Some are concerned that professors are too much of one stripe — too "liberal." Of course, most college teachers, by training and temperament, are open-minded to new ideas and may be characterized as liberal; it is incident to their profession. Whether some are sufficiently knowledgeable of the workings and problems of the Town is sometimes a valid question, particularly when they make public pronouncements and judgments outside their fields. The Town has been relatively tolerant in these situations, but it has been losing patience.

The Gown has not spoken on any of these matters with a single voice. There was a time, in the earliest days of the universities and colleges, when all segments of the institution would have replied together. The community of scholars during the Middle Ages — teachers and students — would have pulled their ragged gowns tight and replied, "Keep your hands off; don't order us; don't interfere with us; we will decide what we must say and do."

BUT, today the Gown is divided and subdivided, confused and unsure. Student views are particularly in conflict. The extremely militant, as we know, contend that the whole structure of higher education is hopelessly antiquated and that the curriculum and teaching procedures are irrelevant to the social needs of the day. Therefore, the institution must be scrapped. The university must be destroyed along with the corrupt society it so corruptly serves. Then, purified in the revolution, something noble would be built — a free university would function in complete freedom in a brotherly society of free men. This utopian campus would emerge without a plan and without a program; I imagine, it would look something like the Flood without the Ark. We could dismiss this nihilism as nonsense if it had not achieved so much mischief in the last three years.

The militant black students, however, do have more specific objectives in mind. They, too, seek revolution in higher education. But they could

be content to capture part of the institution and let the remainder fend for itself. The part they take over must be brought to serve the needs of the ghetto; they constitute the only relevance. To assure that these needs would be satisfied, they require that black students (controlled by the militants) would select the black professors to teach the black subjects — black ego, black history, black statistics, and black language, either Swahili or perhaps some dialect of the ghetto, and other areas of black study. Thus, they would acquire dependable leadership who would apply their black knowledge to emancipate their people from the city ghetto and lead them into some unpromised land of black nationalism. Where? Is it to be the rest of the city? Is it to be some nation ghetto between our Atlantic and Pacific shores? (Even Stokely Carmichael regards such separatism as impossible in this country.) Whatever it may be, such a program is predicated on a whole series of irrelevancies and assumptions bound to lead to frustration and tragedy for all concerned. The curriculum would either be false — lacking academic integrity, bearing no relationship to the pursuit of truth — or be falsely labelled — that is, the essential subjects would be presented fairly, but the "black" title would have no meaning. The probability is that courses, structured along racial lines, would inspire, motivate, and fan racial hatreds. In the end, the graduates of such a program would be wholly unprepared to adjust to the world in which they seek dignity, jobs, and comforts; they could only cause the ghetto to become more frustrated, more angry, more violent. Perhaps, these negative aims are those that are intended, but the college and the university cannot acquiesce to the implementation of such a program without betraying the principle of its being. Unquestionably, underlying the program are essential needs that must be met and given effective academic form in a curriculum designed to remedy past omissions, to set forth ethnic contributions, to deal with ghetto problems and possible solutions, and to develop or extend honest Afro-American, Mexican-American, and other ethnic studies.

There are a substantial number of students who reject the extremes we have been considering, but who are activists and who see the university or college as an instrument of reform. They want to study a problem, arrive at a solution, and apply it to the benefit of the Town: counter pollution, reorganize government, eliminate racism, control population, end War. They are prepared to ring doorbells, man tables, hand out literature, and work for human betterment. They believe the Gown should solve the problems of the Town. (In one area they certainly can make an immediate and future contribution: they can do something about the control of population.)

As nearly as can be estimated, the majority of the students are content, as in the past, to train for the Town jobs. They find their courses in engineering, architecture, natural science, agriculture, and business administration highly relevant to their own needs. They will learn the practical skills which, to a considerable degree, they will later employ. The Town heartily approves, and recruiters go to the campuses to garner the annual crop.

An articulate and colorful minority rejects these square practices,

though they, too, see the college as a place where they will find their personal satisfactions. They seek a kind of happiness and fulfillment the Town frowns upon and does not wish to provide. These students want a personal, hedonistic freedom — expressed in terms of non-responsibility, of mysticism, of sex, of drugs, in a social context best described in "Hair" as the "groovy revolution." The student, with his fellows, living a kind of tribal existence — experimenting with his body and his soul in a variety of personal and group experiences — wants to bring the free life to the Town. They will rid themselves and the Town of their hangups. To the extent of their affluence, the Town may absorb them in its counterpart of a Greenwich Village; otherwise, either the students will conform sufficiently to participate in the Town, or the future for them looks drab indeed.

The curious thing about these hippie students is that they have twisted and turned the idea of a liberal education against itself. Actually, it long has been the purpose of a liberal education for a student to do his own thing. In a way, the mark of a liberal education was, and is, its sense of irrelevancies. In Great Britain, in the 19th Century, the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, schooled in Latin, procuring their degrees in philosophy, in literature, in classic studies, were then given their positions in the British civil service and told to operate the Empire — its trade, its ships, its finances, its ~~politics. The education was totally~~ irrelevant to the function in society. Or was it? Was the apparently irrelevant curriculum the best training the graduate could have received? It taught him how to approach an intellectual problem, how to dig into it, how to think it through, and it demanded a sense of style. From widely diversified subject matter, the students learned something of what the Abbé Dimnet called "the art of thinking." The mind was developed through discipline. And since the student was required to develop an individual style of expression, he often learned a skill which gave enjoyment to himself and his friends for the rest of his life.

I'm aware that the education to which I have referred was a privileged affair, an elitist education. In terms of social awareness, it tended to be narrow and to limit horizons. I am not advocating its adoption, even if it were possible, in our colleges and universities. But, I do call attention to two of its salient successes: first, that the study of subjects which do not indicate any immediate use – in other words, of the apparently "irrelevant" — often has equipped students with the skills to deal with the highly relevant; and, second, irrelevancies have contributed greatly to the individual joy of living.

Perhaps, this is a propitious time to ask the summary question, what is a student in today's colleges? (You once gave me an opportunity to describe a trustee.) I suggest a definition by categories; namely, one who is

A. An anti-student: he wants to teach, not learn; to lecture, not take notes; to dictate, not debate; to tear down, not build.

B. Eager to learn anything bearing directly upon society, its ills, hypocrisies, and injustices, in order to ameliorate, remedy, or reform.

C. Interested to learn to earn (probably the majority).

D. Anxious to discover everything about himself, how to use his

freedom to the limit, to enjoy his personal life in conscious and unconscious pleasures.

E. Bored by the whole business.

The outlook for the 70's is that campus populations will increase astronomically. The Town is warning about costs and higher tuition. The students, finding it difficult to obtain admission into colleges and universities, are crowding the community colleges, then complaining that after two years they still find it difficult, as applicants for transfer, to enter the colleges and universities. The quality of higher education becomes strained under the mass pressure. The question is, do we continue our same educational program and procedures, do we provide more of the same, or do we begin to make some fundamental changes in order to make higher education relevant to the last part of the 20th Century?

I believe that we have never faced the fact that mass higher education has yet to adapt itself to mass needs. We have tried to fit in ever larger numbers into old molds. We give more lectures to more students. We break them up into small classroom sections for discussion, meaning that a few of the articulate dominate the class. We spend too many passive hours in the process of learning. The system will not work much longer. It is too inefficient.

MY own suggestions for changes in the 70's may individually seem moderate, but in the aggregate could mean profound differences from the present program. I am not sure that "changes" is the right word, because certain procedures about to be discussed are already in effect in a number of your institutions and a preliminary basic proposal recommends a return to traditional objectives of higher education.

Thus, at the outset, let us beware of the danger of faddism in higher education—for example, the view that the subjects must be new, the approach must be new, because only the new is good. Too much of this simplistic attitude was evidenced in the student protests of the late 60's. Their efforts to reconstitute education on the basis of assumptions that the society is absolutely corrupt; therefore, education must concentrate on all its weaknesses and vulnerabilities in order to motivate and achieve revolution; the notion that ethnic studies should be synthesized or constructed on the basis of cultural apartheid, whatever the material; the narcissistic concept of many students that education must direct itself solely to expose what has been called "the true me" by constantly probing and digging for identity instead of cultivating it — were a few of the attempts recently made to misdirect the college and the university. The top priority, I do believe, is that higher education must first of all, before any reform, be true to itself—seek the truth, with reason and scepticism, and be the servant of no institution or segment of society—government, industry, political, ethnic, or student group.

But, once this position is firmly taken, there is much to be done, in the way of change, to improve educational quality and the educational process. Most of the modifications would bear directly or indirectly upon the question of relevancy. The views about to be expressed are subject to the limitation that they come from a non-professional (although from

one who, over the years, has had substantial contact with faculty and students).

1. College teaching techniques require a major overhaul. Every college teacher should undergo an intensive course or courses in which he is trained in motivation, lecture structure, devices to interest students and to bring them into the learning process as active participants. Of course, if a teacher does not know his subject, method will be of little help. But, there has not been a sufficient emphasis on the techniques of good teaching and the obligation of a professor to be as interesting as his talents permit.

2. Consistent with the teaching emphasis, the graduate degrees should be modified. The Ph.D. should be reserved for an academic career, chiefly in writing and research; the doctorate for teaching should require knowledge of the subject areas and the ability and interest to teach them.

3. The trend toward interdisciplinary and team teaching should be continued and expanded. The fractionalizing of knowledge has been a cause of narrowing interest and response, of concealing the interrelationships of knowledge and of boredom. Individual departments then should be prevented from pre-programming a student's education with too many detailed and repetitive requirements for his major.

4. Lectures that repeat books should be abandoned. The experience of many students through many college generations is that about half could be cancelled with beneficial results to everybody. The time thus conserved could be spent in more individual attention in problem areas.

5. Reading assignments, personalized to the extent possible, should be increased, along with the requirement of essay-type papers reviewed by the teacher. Nothing reveals the student's understanding, point of view, critical and imaginative faculties as does a provocative essay question. Mass higher education means more education at home by the independent effort of the student.

6. Examinations should be fewer and more comprehensive. Pass-fail examinations might be preferable if unrelated or tangential to the main course of study, but not as an appropriate evaluation of a student's primary program. No one wants a pass-fail doctor, engineer, architect, business executive, or biologist. In depth written evaluations by teachers may be an effective substitute for graded examinations in many instances. In any event the Town is entitled to some evidence that its investment has been productive.

7. The junior college should strengthen and emphasize its terminal programs. Students in the general courses of the junior college and of all colleges and universities, whose attainments are marginal at the end of their sophomore year, should be discouraged from continuing a general program of study toward a bachelor's degree unless their teachers certify to their academic potential in some area of study. The Town's industry should give some luster to the junior college degree by supporting it as a basis for employment, since in a great many instances, there is no reasonable ground for requiring a bachelor's degree. There should be no prejudice to the right of any student who stops college or university at the end of his sophomore year from returning after he has acquired interest or motivation.

8. A much greater exchange between Town and Gown should occur. The Town is a repository of experience and of some wisdom, too. The college or university does well to invite representatives of the Town to its classrooms in order to discuss the problems which they, as decision-makers, or planners, or critics, face every day. For example, much might be gained if judges and lawyers were asked to appear in appropriate undergraduate classes to explain to students what is meant by due process, human rights, the appellate procedure, the rule of law, and the problems encountered in the administration of justice. On the other hand, the studies and theories of the classroom and of research are and can be made available more extensively to the Town. What can result, as a by-product of such experiences in relevance, is that the university or college will become more worldly in its pursuit of truth and the Town will become more conceptual and bolder in approaching change.

9. Students should be given an opportunity to participate in the development of new curricula and the evaluation of old; i.e., to make known their interests, criticisms, and proposals. Student written evaluations of courses and teachers should be considered by faculty committees as a factor in their decisions in promotions and tenure. But, students cannot have an equal voice in these matters; the faculty must retain the power to decide; if it were otherwise, there would be no reason for training, study, experience, or expertise. In the main, students should develop their own rules of conduct, *vis a vis,* the college. Experience indicates that student codes of ethics are as strict, if not more so, than those which are college imposed, provided that the representatives of the total student body and not simply the militants are in control of the drafting. In case of disruption, as the American Bar Association advises, primary reliance should be placed on the college disciplinary proceedings, not on the Town's criminal courts. The prompt and forthright handling of grievances by administrators experienced in human relations is the best means of keeping the campus cool.

10. There is one area of the highest relevance to Town and Gown that, in recent years, has been more and more neglected to the disadvantage of both and another area that has not received a proper emphasis.

The neglected subject is history. Most students of the 60's seemed to feel it is irrelevant. Certainly, their ignorance of the past must be a contributing factor to their imbalance and insecurity. To face the uncertain present and the challenge of the future without any substantial knowledge of what has happened to primitive and ancient man, to medieval and Renaissance man, to man during the ages of enlightenment and revolution, is absurd. While the past is not repeated, it is often echoed; and the mistakes of the Greek City States have their counterparts in the errors of the nation states of today. To refuse to read the past is the height of arrogance and folly. What study could be more relevant? With a little knowledge of history, could one contend that it is better to have nothing than to have contemporary American society, shortcomings included?

In the 70's, the colleges and universities should insist on general history as a required subject, without substitute or alternatives. In addition, I would like to see an intensive course in 20th Century history. It might serve to link the generations. This generation of students would do well to

ascertain how their parents and grandparents met the great new problems of their day and how, through design or accident, their judgment, good or bad, helped shape the world in which they live.

THE other area that somehow seems overlooked is the utter interdependence and complexity of modern urban civilization. It comes to my attention every day in San Francisco. I look out of my office windows and see the Bay Bridges, BART under construction, a vast new Cathedral rising near where its predecessor had been destroyed in a fire, new office buildings going up on every side. Yet, with all of the miraculous equipment and tools of modern construction, it takes years to complete a project. If a new building is to be built, several old ones must be knocked down and the debris removed, the ground excavated and cleaned like a cavity in a tooth, huge pilings hammered into the earth, fill and Bay bottom to secure the heavy foundations, then precisely and painfully floor by floor erected, steel skeleton, countless wires for utilities, joists and beams placed, walls of glass adjusted, automatic elevators—nervous and jerky for a trial period—installed, partitions added, and countless more things done to finish simply a building, to accommodate thousands of people who use all kinds of public and private transport to come and go, who support families and community chests and payments for college fees and tuition from their earnings—besides paying taxes, running households, and seeing their travel agents—and who all work, pour in and out of *one* new building. It takes so long to build—to procure the feasibility studies, the financing, the plans, the equipment, the materials, the labor. It is so easy to destroy—one small bomb will do it all at once to a hundred buildings. But, it does not take a bomb; a power failure will do it, too, at least temporarily—the elevators will stop, communications will be blocked, the life will ooze out of the building.

Have students any idea of the intricacy of the civilization which is being handed to them? Much of it works like a watch with a million parts. Must of it needs to be taken apart or added to or given new form. Yes, it can be changed. It is not all enclosed in steel and glass and concrete. But, it means a delicate mechanism. It has be handled with care. It must not be crushed by wild and hysterical pressures, by the fanaticism of a mob, by the obscenities of War. Its deficencies and injustices should be remedied by expanding its benefits, not by blowing it to pieces or throwing wrenches into the gears. But, such moralizing aside, should not higher education give to all students an understanding of this complexity, of the blood, sweat, and tears it took to construct and build, of the fact that the world they live in just didn't happen, and of their obligation as civilized men and women to *conserve* it as well as *change* it where it should be changed?

What the Town asks is that the students understand its perplexities, its diverse interests, its incredible interpendence, its aspirations, and then feel a commitment to the community. Because, without such a commitment, youth could use its knowledge of the complexities for sabotage, rather than for social and civic improvement. And, the Town expects the Gown to develop such a commitment.

11. Indeed, the Town has greater expectations. The Town is painfully aware of its limitations, of the difficulties in communicating with, and meeting the needs of, its varied population. It acknowledges and explains the reasons for its imperfections and deficiencies; too many people in different circumstances and too hard to reach.

But, then the Town eyes the Gown—teachers and students of an intellectual level substantially above the Town. The purpose of the institution is more clearly defined, and the whole life of the place is communication. Here is a society that should work, that should provide a model of self-government. If not in such an advantaged environment, where?

Therefore, when the Gown presents the spectacle of faculty vs. administration, of students opposing both, and of all confronting Trustees, the Town is sadly disappointed. If the college cannot demonstrate how freedom and order may be adjusted in a fairly select community, then what are the prospects for the Town? The Town quite understandably feels let down by a failure in college governance. It does not seem too much to ask that the college put its house in order as a top priority.

A PRINCIPAL reform must be the reconstitution of the college presidency. The president must be more than a conciliator and consensus taker. The president must be afforded some of the security and prerogatives of leadership and high executive responsibility. Of course, he should not be on a collision course with his faculty, or with students, or with trustees. But, he should enjoy the presumption of authority and every decision should not be a subject for detailed explanation and defense. Students should not have the right to put the president on the carpet whenever they deem an accounting is necessary. In exchange for giving students a significant place in influencing decisions or in the decision-making process concerning affairs that directly pertain to them, students must accept the principle that with responsibility goes authority, and that the office in which authority reposes must be respected.

What is required of the students should, from different perspectives, be mandatory on faculty, trustees and public officials. A president cannot provide leadership or be creative or constructive if he is constantly being confronted with the second guesses and hindsight wisdom of these other segments of governance. The president should enjoy the presumption of innocence and ability. When the record clearly goes against him, remove him, if that is the required decision, but after he has had a hearing at least equivalent to the consideration afforded the college janitor, let alone the tenured professor. But, quit picking on him for the sport, or he and his fellow presidents will become an extinct species.

With the president restored to a position of authority, the faculty senate should become a parliament responsible for most decisions on academic policy, subject to budgetary controls. But, it must learn to accelerate its deliberations and to engage in less professional logrolling. Most important, it must develop procedures to control its doctrinaire politicians who operate solely with power in mind. Some of the younger firebrands who want to capture control of the university as a step toward a general revolutionary takeover of the Town must be contained by their professional

peers. When the Gown shows the way that changes may be made peacefully, the Town will profit by the example.

But, the Town — nations, states, and cities — has vast responsibilities of its own. Until it tackles the fundamental issues of survival — the control of nuclear arms, of environment, of population, and of urban living — with that concentration of energy, talent, material, and money heretofore reserved for the conduct of world wars, there will be student unrest arising from deeply imbedded fears that we are all drifting to extinction on an Earth destined to become a man-made moon.

THESE final comments have been sprinkled with "musts" and "shoulds." It could not be otherwise. Ultimately, any form of democracy depends on a high degree of self-discipline. There is no assurance that it will be exercised. There is only the hope that the special community of the Gown, more intellectually disciplined that most of society, will meet its problems more honestly and more reasonably than the community off campus.

And, here is where you come in — the presidents and principal administrators of a great number of important colleges and universities. I recommend that you assume and use your authority to the utmost to make campus governance viable. Whatever your critics may say, they can't do without you. No executive in any other field shoulders a greater or more important responsibility. No other executive has more noble values to conserve or more far-reaching changes to make. No other executive performs a more constructive service for society. No other executive is closer to understanding the perils and pitfalls of knowledge, new and old, and of the intellectual, as well as the physical, ills that beset mankind. You are the strongest representatives in the 70's of that ideal of the Greeks—of moderation in all things—that can be the saving grace of even a technologically oriented civilization. Hold on, and lead your campuses—and your actions will have a unique relevance for the Town. The Town will respect you and usually support you; and, if on some issue they can't forgive you, they will forgive your successor.